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The study is admittedly specialized; it does not deal with the nature of Norris's art, but it records materials useful for such a study, which Mr. Åhnebrink is making.

Washington and Jefferson College. CHARLES CHILD WALCUTT.

VICTORIAN CINDERELLA: *The Story of Harriet Beecher Stowe.* By Phyllis Wynn Jackson. New York: Holiday House. 1947. 296 pp. Illustrated. $3.00.

Great expectations did not enter much into Harriet Beecher Stowe's calculations. As a young person (we are reminded by Miss Jackson's *Victorian Cinderella*), she was not unaware of latent powers, and she early gave evidence of great tenacity of purpose. Yet her situation did not augur eminence. She was a woman, and that meant a sharp delimitation of what she could hope to accomplish in Victorian America. She was a Beecher woman, and that meant (she feared) following a familiar formula of subordination: maybe she would get to be a teacher or a minister's wife. (She became both—but how much more in addition!) She was odd-looking, gauche, and more than usually silent. A small dark corner of life was all this Cinderella could hope for.

She did in fact for many years follow the pattern that seemed indicated. Poverty, hardship, and rebuff she endured aplenty. But there were astonishing things in her "future." As time went on, she had more and more the air of being surprised at what life set before her. She had been surprised at her first opportunity to fly the Beecher nest at Litchfield: she was going to be permitted to study and to teach at Hartford. Fate (so it seemed) swooped down and ordered the exodus to Ohio, where she endured the filth and squalor of a frontier city and where, on the very fringes of that ineffably iniquitous institution of slavery, she first became fully aware of tensions that would finally convulse the nation. Personal surprises continued to crop up. She rubbed her eyes when she learned that editors were willing to pay real money for stories she had had fun in writing. And marriage—how could such a homely little minx ever hope to escape spinsterhood? Well, she got her man. To be sure, the manner of his coming and the circumstances of the betrothal were sufficiently fantastic. And certainly Professor Calvin Stowe was in person and station far from a Prince Charming. Existence was unpredictable, sometimes shocking, sometimes thrilling. Harriet gasped, gulped, sighed, murmured, or clenched her fists as the case called for—but she carried on.

More hardship and much motherhood preceded the return to New England, where began the strangest cycle of all. In Brunswick she was at first only a "faculty wife," but it was there that the unconscious

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preparation of many years—all that she had ever seen or heard or read about slavery—found its emotional focus when she had a "vision" one day in church. And the *National Era,* for which she had been writing sedate domestic pieces, proved to be a ready transmission medium for the stores of power she had been accumulating.

Mrs. Stowe was as surprised as any one when the reception of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* proved that she was helping to shape the destiny of a nation. The meek little Beecher girl had become an object of interest to the world. She claimed no credit, insisting that God "wrote the book." But she was astonished to discover that the story which she had hoped would touch the hearts of people (especially in the South) had the effect of generating such fierce hatreds between men. She found it hard to believe that a book written with such a consuming desire to aid humanity should have made the author the object of such intense personal recrimination. She had still to learn that it is particularly dangerous for a woman to interfere in business and politics. The personal effects of her fame on Cinderella were dazzling enough: the trip to Scotland and England and the Continent conformed to storybook pattern. Remotely cherished dreams were magically objectified. Why, she could now buy as many silk dresses as she had a mind to. When people took "tea" with her, they might be two thousand strong. Yet she did not swerve appreciably from the high purpose which had animated her with an essentially religious fervor. She worked on for humanity. She visited Lincoln to urge emancipation. She coped, too, with personal relationships that were altered by her new status. Saddened to find her darling younger brother Henry Ward Beecher so fearful of speaking out against slavery, she had besought him to use his great personal gifts in the cause. It was disillusioning, too, to discover that Henry Ward was patently jealous of her fame. Friends disappointed her when they regarded her rejection of Calvinistic doctrine as a proof of impiety on her part. Yet she met these, as well as many other personal trials and tribulations, with the sturdy resilience that she showed throughout her long life. A Cinderella she may have been, but she was also a staunch New Englander. She was as competent to deal with the factual as with the fabulous.

In her biography of Harriet Beecher Stowe Miss Jackson emphasizes, among other things, the problem of the homely little girl trying to find her way in a world made largely for and by men. In analyzing Harriet's personal problems she produces a vivid and sometimes touching portrait. There are extremely interesting portraits also of other members of the family, including the brilliant and quixotic Lyman Beecher. There is also much description of living habits of the early nineteenth century, a

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New England Thanksgiving in the 1820's, for example. The author's narrative technique is basically good, though not unflawed in the execution. Her plan apparently was to follow the life-line of Harriet and to bring in data revealing the life of the period only in so far as they impinged on her consciousness. Yet this good intention is somewhat awkwardly violated in a number of passages when the author merely *supplies* information. No attempt is made to reproduce the speech of the period, but the simplicity of most of the language and the avoidance of markedly modern idiom favor the reader's acceptance of many imagined conversations.

This book is not designed for scholars. It purports to offer no new materials. Moreover, Miss Jackson was not concerned to quote Mrs. Stowe's letters with literal accuracy. *Victorian Cinderella* is not a literary or an historical study but a human document. It is best adapted to young folk in quest of a basically true story of a real person who became a great national figure. It should be particularly interesting to teen-age boys and girls. Yet it is not "written down" to any particular level, and adult readers who dip into it may well find it hard to set the book down.

Wesleyan University. ALEXANDER COWIE.

GEORGE ADE, WARMHEARTED SATIRIST. By Fred C. Kelly. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 1947. 282 pp. $3.50.

Mr. Kelly, a newspaperman and the author of several biographies, has given us a journalist's account of the life of George Ade (1866-1944). Here are great quantities of facts about Ade's childhood, his education, his career as a journalist, humorist, playwright, and scenario writer, his way of living, his wide travels.

Mr. Kelly has a good deal of the equipment necessary for a satisfactory study of Ade's life and works—industry, careful thoroughness, sympathy with his subject, an ability to write interestingly. He has collected many of Ade's autobiographical remarks, and he quotes them frequently since he believes that "the best way to acquaint the reader with the character and individuality of George Ade is to use his own language." He has also read what others say about the humorist; he has interviewed friends; he has recalled his own associations with Ade, and he has gone through a large collection of personal papers. The result is a detailed and readable record of a popular author's life.

But unfortunately Mr. Kelly lacks one kind of equipment very important for the writing of this sort of a biography. The lack is evident when, for instance, he wishes to acquaint the reader with the quality of one of Ade's much admired fables in slang. Mr. Kelly quotes the fable,

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